

LEAN IMPROVEMENTS LEAD TO GREATER ORDER-ENTRY
EFFICIENCY

ABOUT ALDEN TOOL CO INC. Alden Tool Company specializes in the manufacture of surgical cutting tools, instruments, and components for the orthopedic, spinal, maxillofacial and cranial industries. The company is located in Berlin, Connecticut and has been operating as a family-owned business since 1947. Alden's highly-skilled machinists utilize the most advanced equipment and technology to produce superior quality surgical instrumentation. Their team works in tandem with customers' engineers to ensure expectations are met and to control manufacturing costs.

THE CHALLENGE. On-time delivery is key for any manufacturer and Alden Tool is no exception. Alden knew they had to trim the time needed to "get the job going." They were operating at about a 50 percent on-time delivery schedule and struggling with some orders, especially the repeat ones that might have just a few changes but enough to make it difficult to simply switch gears. Alden Tool had previously worked with CONNSTEP, part of the MEP National Network™, and turned to them again for help in determining what to do to be more efficient when the order gets on the floor.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. Job-kitting was recommended by the business growth consultant from CONNSTEP, in the form of a 1-2-3 position rack. Some set-up reduction was also involved in the process. Since kitting involves the gathering of components and parts needed for the manufacture of a particular product, the Alden team took the time to see what resources and materials were needed to do the job. Components were gathered together as a kit and issued to the point of use. CONNSTEP also helped Alden Tool to standardize. With the adoption of job-kitting, set-up reduction and standardization, Alden Tool registered a 40% production time improvement, and their on-time delivery consistently approaches 90%. The implementation of Lean tools and techniques enabled the organization to do more with less and maintain the quality standards customers expect from Alden Tool.

"Nobody is carrying inventory anymore. So when a customer tells us when they want their job completed, they have to have it when they need it. Which is why working with CONNSTEP was really beneficial. Reorganizing our order-entry process and flow allowed us to significantly improve our on-time delivery which enhances the value we add to our customers."

-John Killeen, Vice President

RESULTS



\$400,000 increased/retained sales



\$75,000 in cost savings



5 new or retained jobs



\$400,000 in new investment

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